



Chicago Federal Executive Board

230 S. Dearborn, Room 3816
Chicago, Illinois 60604
<http://www.chicago.feb.gov>

Chair: Jack G. Hetrick
Executive Director: Jan Stinson



IN THE LOOP: Bringing the *FEB News* to You

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Jack Hetrick
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FEB Mission

The Chicago FEB's work relates to three mission themes:

- Advance the Administration's Goals and Initiatives;
- Create and Advance Local Initiatives; and,
- Provide Information, Referrals, and Guidance for Intergovernmental and Community Outreach.

Executive Committee

Chair

Jack G. Hetrick

Department of Veterans Affairs

Vice Chair

Darlene A. Lorman

Department of Labor

Secretary/Treasurer

Martin W. Baumgaertner

Merit Systems Protection Board

Christopher Blum

Federal Aviation Administration

Earl Flowers

United States Postal Office

Robert Grant

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Colonel Gary Johnston

Army Corps of Engineers

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Jack G. Hetrick



The Chicago Federal Executive Board Executive Committee and its various committees have been busy working and planning for an exciting agenda of programs and training opportunities scheduled over the next several months. Coming up shortly is the Full Board Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. This meeting will be held at the City of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management, and I encourage all Federal Executives and their key staff to attend. Emergency management planning continues to be a strong focus of the Chicago FEB.

I would also like to extend my personal thanks to James F. Martin who has chaired this year's Combined Federal Campaign. As the final numbers are being tallied, I know that Jim and his staff have devoted many hours of their time working with the campaign executives provided by various agencies to achieve a successful CFC. Also, thanks to each Chicago Federal Executive for their support and attention to the recent CFC. Many Chicago-area Federal employees have stepped up to the plate to contribute to the campaign's success.

As I write this message, the final plans are being developed for the Federal Employee of the Year Awards Program. This year's program will be held on May 2, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago. The FEB encourages all Federal supervisors and managers to consider nominating deserving employees within their agency and to support the awards program by attending. Planning for this program involves a great deal of hard work and dedication and the FEB wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to Earl Flowers and the Post Office for coordinating this year's program.

The FEB Executive Committee has worked closely with SkillPath to offer an exciting array of training programs/seminars at very competitive rates. These programs were a tremendous success last year. A message was sent on January 11, 2006 announcing the course names, dates and locations.

In closing, I would like to extend my best wishes to each of you for 2006 and encourage you to join me in making it a successful year for the Chicago Federal Executive Board.

Jack G. Hetrick, CFAAMA, FACHE
Director, Hines VA Hospital

Anne Lombardi

Department of Homeland Security

Janet Odeshoo

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Captain Richard Postera

Department of the Navy

John P. Rowe

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Thomas Skinner

Environmental Protection Agency

Henry Valiulis

Railroad Retirement Board

Richard Witkowski

Internal Revenue Service

Ex-Officio Members**Kenneth P. Boehne**

Railroad Retirement Board

Joseph P. Galvan

Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

James Handley

General Services Administration

Ollice C. Holden

Department of Agriculture

David E. Kuehl

National Archives and Records Administration

James F. Martin

Social Security Administration

Stanley D. Moore

Bureau of the Census

Phyllis M. Stabbe

Office of Personnel Management

Useful Links

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HIGHLIGHT: SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

U.S. Small Business Administration

**REGION V RECEIVES TOP
NATIONAL HONOR**

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Region V Office—which covers the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin—was recently acknowledged as the top regional office in the nation. Region V is one of SBA's 10 regional offices.

Led by Regional Administrator, Patrick Rea, Region V continues to achieve its mission of helping America's entrepreneurs start, grow or expand their business and working with the small business community. "Thanks to the tremendous leadership from all of our District Directors and their staff, we were able to achieve this prestigious honor," says Rea. "Much of Region V's success has been three-fold. We have been able to effectively bridge gaps by developing alliances with lending partners and underserved groups; improving access to capital and assisting in reducing regulatory burdens; and increasing small businesses' access to government contracts."

Region V continues its rich history of financing small business dreams for Midwest entrepreneurs at a record pace. In fiscal year 2005, the SBA's Region V Office provided small businesses over \$3.2 billion dollars in financing. For the past 50 years, Region V has assisted over 161,000 Midwest entrepreneurs with more than \$29 billion in financing.

About the SBA

The overall mission of the SBA is to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting and protecting the interest of small businesses and by helping families and small businesses recover from national disasters.

The SBA has many resources and programs designed for small businesses. Whether it is assisting entrepreneurs in developing a business plan, identifying financing options, accessing resources or completing loan applications—the SBA is there to help small businesses succeed.

The SBA extends its services through a team of network partners that provide management and technical services. These partners include the Small Business Development Centers, SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives and the Women's Business Centers.

Your Voice in Government

The SBA also houses two offices, the Office of Advocacy and the Office of the National Ombudsman, which further assist the small business community.

Office of Advocacy

The SBA's Office of Advocacy is the independent voice for the small business community inside the Federal government, working to ensure rules and regulations do not unfairly affect small entities. The Office of Advocacy also provides research, develops policies and proposes legislation to help small businesses succeed. There is a Regional Advocate in each of the SBA's 10 regional offices. The Region V Advocate is Ray Machiori. For more information on the Office of Advocacy, visit www.sba.gov/advo.

Office of the National Ombudsman

If a small business is subject to unfair audits, fines or regulatory enforcement, the SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman is available to assist. The Ombudsman holds hearings around the country and reports to Congress on Federal regulatory fairness. For more information on the Office of the National Ombudsman, visit www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

The SBA Region V Office is located at 500 West Madison, Suite 1240, in the Citicorp Building. For information about SBA's Region V Office, visit www.sba.gov/region5.

HIGHLIGHT: RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD



The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), an independent executive-branch agency, is the only agency headquartered in the Chicago area. The RRB's primary function is to administer comprehensive retirement-survivor and unemployment-sickness benefit programs for the nation's railroad workers and their families. Linked with the retirement program, the RRB also has responsibilities for certain social security benefit payments and aspects of rail workers' Medicare coverage.

The RRB is headed by three members appointed by the President – one recommended by railroad employers and another by rail labor groups, with the board chairman appointed to represent the public interest. The President also appoints an Inspector General for the RRB.

The current members of the board are Chairman Michael Schwartz, Labor Member V. M. Speakman, Jr., and Management Member Jerome Kever. The Inspector General is Martin Dickman. The RRB's senior civil servant is Henry Valiulis, who represents the agency on the Chicago FEB Executive Committee.

The agency's headquarters has been located at 844 North Rush since it moved from Washington, D.C. in the early 1940s. The RRB has approximately 950 employees, with a third located in three regional offices and 53 field offices around the country. The Office of Inspector General has about 50 employees.

During fiscal year 2005, retirement-survivor benefits of nearly \$9.2 billion were paid to about 634,000 beneficiaries, while net unemployment-sickness benefits of \$73 million were paid to approximately 29,000 claimants. After the rail industry went through a period of downsizing, railroad employment has stabilized in recent years at around 230,000 workers. In fact, after legislation passed in 2001 provided some early retirement provisions, the rail industry is actively hiring employees to replace recent retirees.

That 2001 legislation also established a unique approach to investment and management of the railroad retirement trust funds. It established a quasi-independent entity known as the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust.

The sole purpose of the Trust is to manage and invest railroad retirement assets, and it is authorized to invest them in a diversified investment portfolio, including private equities such as stocks and bonds. (The Trust has no powers or authority with respect to benefit calculations or payments, as this is the sole responsibility of the RRB.)

While the railroad retirement system has remained separate from the social security system, the two systems are closely coordinated with regard to earnings credits, benefit payments and financing.

The RRB was created as part of the New Deal in the 1930's as the Great Depression indicated the need for national retirement programs. At that time, railroads had much more developed private pension plans than other industries, as they had pioneered such benefits in the 19th century.

However, the economic conditions magnified the shortcomings of those plans. The RRB was established as a separate entity from the Social Security Administration largely due to the sheer size of the rail industry at that time coupled with the more developed private plans.

Similarly, unemployment insurance benefits for rail workers were assigned to the RRB because so many of them moved from state to state, which tended to raise questions about eligibility and benefit levels under the state-run programs.

The RRB also pays disability benefits. Like Social Security Administration, this includes payments to people who are totally and permanently disabled for all work. However, the RRB also administers a unique occupational disability program, which provides benefits for people unable to work in their regular railroad occupation.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT: COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Community Service Committee (CSC) is charged with the responsibility to enhance community outreach with the public-at-large by promoting volunteerism, civic engagement and providing a clearinghouse function to the Chicago-area Federal community.

The Committee accomplishes its mission by offering opportunities for Federal employees to support local agencies and individuals through various initiatives.

- The **Dress for Success Clothing Drive**, held annually each fall, benefits individuals enrolled in local job training programs. The October 2005 drive yielded over 3,800 items of clothing which were donated to six nonprofit organizations.
- The CSC conducted a **Cell Phones for Soldiers Drive**. Chicago Federal employees donated 840 minutes of calling cards, and over 1250 used cell phones! These used cell phones were sold, with the proceeds used to purchase calling cards for an Illinois National Guard unit now stationed in Iraq.
- **Blood Drives** are held throughout the year and give downtown Federal employees the opportunity to donate.
- In collaboration with the Chicago Public Schools the Committee supports **Principal for a Day**, an annual event that matches Federal managers with public schools.

- Finally, in response to the devastation caused by the 2005 hurricanes, the CSC sponsored a **Winter Weather Wear Drive** to collect winter coats and accessories for evacuees currently living in Illinois. Over 500 coats, hats, scarves, gloves and sweaters were provided to the hurricane evacuees supported by the State of Illinois, Department of Human Services.

The CSC is co-chaired by Helen Blount, a Revenue Agent with the Internal Revenue Service, and John Hosteny, Director of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Other members and the Federal agencies they represent are: George Bloomingbird (FAA), Rita Burke (DHS), Bonnie Gunter and Marie James (VA), Evelyn Hampton (DOL), Tiffani Humble (GAO), Maya Eastman and Mary Egan (IRS), Michelle Majack and Juan Thomas (EPA), Robert Seidner (OPM), Lt. Chris Streng (U.S. Navy), Jeanmarie Walsh (USDA) and Mae Washington (SSA). The common denominator of the members, with such diverse backgrounds and job responsibilities, is their desire to provide channels through which their fellow Federal employees can give something back to their local communities.

For more information on the CSC, its members, and upcoming events, please visit the Chicago FEB web site at www.chicago.feb.gov. The CSC page lists numerous web links to national and local service organizations. These agencies provide additional opportunities to Federal employees to offer their time and donations.

SkillPath Seminars

SkillPath, established in 1989, is a business training provider offering 82 seminars in the areas of business and professional skills, administrative support training, business writing and advertising, customer service, facilities management, finance and accounting, human resources, management and supervisory, personal development/communication, project and time management, computer skills, and desktop publishing/graphics. At present, they deliver more than 20,000 "how-to" sessions to over 500,000 people in 450 cities. Tuition for seminars offered directly through SkillPath range from \$149 to \$399 per seminar.

In 2004, the FEB entered into a contract with SkillPath to provide training to the Chicago FEB member employees for a significantly reduced cost of \$58 per person per seminar. Since May 2004, the FEB has sponsored over 25 SkillPath seminars; each with an average attendance of 56 people. Courses offered to date have been:

- Advanced Management Skills
- Anger Management
- Assertive Communication Skills
- Business Writing and Grammar Skills
- Coaching and Team Building
- Communicating with Diplomacy and Professionalism
- Creativity Camp
- Dealing Effectively with Unacceptable Employee Behavior
- Dealing with Emotions in the Workplace
- Dealing with Negative Attitudes in the Workplace
- Essentials of Excellent Customer Service
- Excelling as a Manager or Supervisor
- How to Become a Better Communicator
- How to Deal with Difficult People
- Stress Solutions
- Terrific Telephone Skills

For information on upcoming seminars, visit the FEB website or contact Rosaura Velez at 312-886-2296.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are in the Kluczynski Federal Building, 230 South Dearborn, Room 3818, Chicago, Illinois.

February 2006		March 2006	
2	Community Service Committee meeting	8-11	CFC Regional Workshop I
6-10	Shared Neutrals Alternative Dispute Resolution Program	15-17	FEB Executive Directors' Conference, Portland, Oregon
14	Executive Committee meeting, Valentine's Day	16	Executive Leadership Series, Session 2
15	FEB Full Board meeting, City of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management	17	St. Patrick's Day
16	Executive Leadership Series, Session 1	21	Diversity Advisory Council meeting
20	PRESIDENT'S DAY – HOLIDAY	23	SkillPath - Conflict Resolution and Confrontation Management (Metcalfe Federal Building)
21	Diversity Advisory Council meeting	23	Procurement Roundtable
23	SkillPath - Business Writing & Grammar Skills Made Easy & Fun! (Metcalfe Federal Building)	30	REACH Seminar - (Metcalfe Federal Building)